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ABSTRACT

Political repression of faculty members and the use of an archive of records to help remedy this phenomenon are discussed. The focus is the use of coercion to compel the behavior of politically dissident faculty members, particularly by the use of dismissal. The archive of records would indicate faculty members fired, not hired, or harassed for their dissent against some aspect of established power. While the emphasis is upon repression of politically left academics, the problem includes sexual, racial, and professional uses of power to benefit some and discriminate against others. After tracing the history of political repression in academia starting in the nineteenth century, it is claimed that an archive would lead to exposure because it would demonstrate the fact of the tenacity of the problem and would attract scholars and lead to publications. As a guide to the workings of repression, the archive would gain political and historical value, and its psychological and moral value to the living victims of repression would be important. Hopefully, the result would be to strengthen the struggle to enlarge freedom of thought and speech and equal rights in academia. Principals for appraisal and selection of documents are considered. 12 references. (SW)

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THE NEED FOR AN ARCHIVE

James R. Bennett

Presented at the National Conference on Academic Freedom,
University of Florida, Gainesville, January 15-16, 1987

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Political Repression in Academia
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Power and Dissent

By **political** I mean the organization and use of power. John Kenneth Galbraith in The Anatomy of Power defines power as the ability to impose one's will over others, and he examines three ways by which such will is enforced: conditioning, compensation, and threat or reality of punishment. My subject is non-violent punishment as an instrument of orthodoxy. Stephen Kaplan in Diplomacy of Power defines **repression** as "the use of coercion or the threat of coercion" (p.34). (Brian Martin in Intellectual Suppression prefers the use of the term **suppression** for nonviolent restraint or inhibition.) By **radical dissent** I mean opposition to established ideology, to policies, practices, and vested interests of elite groups--economic, sexual, and racial. Closely related is the systemic suppression Russell Jacoby describes in The Last Intellectual--the endemic, and he finds inevitable, conformity produced by specialized, professionalized academic departments and the scholarship produced by them. I am not discussing faculty suppressed for local conflict, such as criticism of an administrator, cases which particularly draw fire from the AAUP. I am investigating the use of coercion to compel the behavior of politically dissident faculty members, particularly by the use of dismissal. Many remedies have been proposed. Here I advocate one remedy not yet available: an archive of records pertaining to faculty members fired, not hired, or harassed for their dissent against some aspect of established power.

My discussion focuses upon repression of politically left academics, but the problem, let me repeat, includes sexual, racial, and professional uses of power to benefit some and discriminate against others. Joan Abramson, even though her The Invisible Woman deals exclusively with sex discrimination, understands that conflict as part of the larger struggle between political repression on campus and equal rights (xi). Manning Marable, because he is both socialist and black, even though his How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America discusses only "Black American labor and life," understands the "inequality and the burden of capitalist democracy." And my emphasis upon left-wing academics has more relevance to the U. S. than to many other countries, because the power of capital is much greater here. At the University of Wollongong, Australia, for example, there are "several members of the Communist Party of Australia among the staff and students and no one has ever made the slightest critical comment about it" (though at the Australian National University, "radicals of any variety" are "thin on the ground"). Furthermore, he observes, "Changes in social structure may be changing the main types of suppression. As the 'new social movements'--anti-racism, environmentalism, feminism, peace--become the major challengers to the status (and labour becomes coopted and quiescent), academics doing work relevant to these groups

encounter increasing difficulties" (personal letter).

Repression of the Left

The unique bigotry against the radical left in the U. S. is exemplified by the warning in The Wall Street Journal of 12,000 Marxists teaching in U.S. colleges and by the portrayal by Accuracy in Academia in issue after issue of its newsletter of the seizure of higher education by the left. But there is no Marxist threat to U. S. education--understood as a replacement of capitalist indoctrination by Marxist--not even any threat from the combined ecological, religious, feminist, racial, and Marxist left. The reality is quite different from that projected by right-wing and conservative fears. Yet the over one hundred year effort to extirpate any socialist competition in the schools continues unabated.

Were evidence available of the faculty silenced by fear of a threat of coercion, as it is not, the proposal I am setting forth would collapse under a mountain of records. But As Ellen Schrecker says in Chapter 9 of her book on McCarthyism in higher education, "'A Source of Friction': The Quieter Dismissals of Left-Wing Teachers":

> Not every teacher dismissed for political reasons during the early Cold War years lost his or her job as the direct result of a public investigation. Some were let go quietly. . . . Evidence for such purges is hard to come by, for many, perhaps most, of these cases--especially those involving junior faculty members--were handled without publicity. In addition, many administrators sought to conceal or deny the political nature of the dismissals. . . .The teachers themselves assisted in these cover-ups, in the hope that silence might promote future employment. Because of this secrecy, much of the evidence here will be less complete than I, as a historian, feel comfortable with" (p. 241).

Thus, discussion of the subject of academic political repression must be limited to publicized cases of actual dismissal, non-hiring, or harassment for which public documentation exists. The impact of these dismissals upon the faculties of the nation in creating a safely orthodox professoriate has been too little studied. The research that does exist, however, for example by Lazarsfeld and Thielens on the McCarthy period, suggests how thoroughly self-censorship is inculcated in teachers by the dismissal of a few.

The history of political repression in academia goes back into the nineteenth century. Take the cases of Richard T. Ely and his student, Edward Bemis, discussed by Schrecker as instances of repression of the left and by Jacoby as repression of a public intellectuals. Ely was tried but not fired by the University of Wisconsin Regents in 1894 for defending strikes and boycotts. He henceforth eschewed public controversy to concentrate upon "scientific" investigations. "What is often obscure in the history of academic freedom is its almost inverse relationship to professionalization," Jacoby observes. "When threatened" teachers "have withdrawn. . .into their speciality. Professionalization has served as a refuge; it has also entailed a

privatization that eviscerates academic freedom" (p. 126). Schrecker describes Ely as an outspoken voice for social reform and the "Christian left," until faced with unemployment, when he "caved in" (p. 15). "The specter of dismissal and unemployment raised by the fate of some professors could and did silence entire faculties, which had no more, and probably less, courage than any random grouping of individuals" (Jacoby, p. 126).

Bemis was fired from the University of Chicago in 1895 for advocating the public ownership of railroads and utilities and for his friendliness to the labor movement. His case is particularly instructive because it set a pattern of deception and coercion for suppressing dissidents (Furner, pp. 165-198; Sinclair, pp. 244-45): the president of the university and the trustees blamed Bemis' scholarship and teaching, not his politics. Thereafter, except for one two-year position, he never found another teaching job. And academia turned more politically timid in regard to advocacy of social change and more preoccupied with narrower professional activities. Subterfuge and unemployment became the weapons against disagreement with the status quo and faculty self-censorship and conformity the consequences.

The American Association of University Professors was founded in 1915 in this conservative context. That same year, its Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure created a cautious code of "objectivity," "neutrality," restraint, respect, and noncontroversiality. The code was revised and is now known as the 1940 Statement. From the point of view of politically threatened teachers, the AAUP tried to trade criticism of established power for professional autonomy and institutional freedom from intervention by representatives of that power. Teachers critical of the system were sacrificed to the profession and the institution. Consequently, political radicals became more of a threat to the established faculty than to established power, which has seldom needed to intervene directly, so thoroughly inculcated became the code of self-regulation. Recognizing the weakness of the 1940 Statement, in 1970 the AAUP published Interpretative Comments, including a statement that "Controversy is at the heart of the free academic inquiry which the entire statement is designed to foster." It is difficult to say whether this qualification had any real effect. Guarding the Ivory Tower by Meranto and Lippman, a compendium of repression cases in the sixties, seventies, and early eighties, suggests not. In regard to equal opportunity for women, Joan Abramson believed in 1975 that "At the present time the AAUP is the last place a woman should go if she is asking for a reexamination of the system. The AAUP is set up to police and enforce that very system" (p. 155). And although Marable does not refer to the AAUP in his chapter on Black education, his attitude seems clear: "The process of Black educational underdevelopment has returned in a fashion to its original premises: the overt suppression of independent Black educational institutions, and the elimination of Black educators who call for the transformation of the racist/capitalist order" (p. 228).

Schrecker's book exposes how feeble the doctrine of academic freedom has been when faced with anti-communism and Sovietphobia. In her first three chapters Schrecker reveals how rhetorical and insubstantial was the development of academic freedom since 1886,

invoked then and during the Cold War period "more often to defend" the institution "than the political rights of an individual" (p. 23). By the 1940s, Communist Party members "were no longer welcome in American universities" (p. 24). In New York State, for example, the Rapp-Coudert Committee initiated "by far the largest purge of politically undesirable professors ever" until the McCarthy era of 1953-54 (p. 76). Yet it is her judgment that by and large throughout these decades the communist professors were "neither dupes nor conspirators," but "a group of serious men and women who sincerely hoped to create a better world" and who for various reasons chose the Communist Party as their organization for effecting social change (pp. 61-62).

In Chapter 4 she turns to her main subject--the witchhunts against communists, radicals, and controversial faculty during the 1940s and 1950s, the collaboration of the academic community with the government, and the damage done to academic freedom.

> The academy did not fight McCarthyism. It contributed to it. The dismissals, the blacklists, and above all the almost universal acceptance of the legitimacy of what the congressional committees and other official investigators were doing conferred respectability upon the most repressive elements of the anti-Communist crusade" (p. 340).

She perceives two stages in the government-academy "movement to eliminate Communism from American life." In an inversion of the Spanish Inquisition, in which the Church charged and the State executed, the government "administered the first stage of McCarthyism, acting through the agency of investigating committees and the FBI to identify political undesirables on campus. It let the universities handle the second stage and get rid of the targeted individuals." This second stage is her central focus, specifically "the response of administrators and faculty members to the anti-Communist furor of the 1940s and 1950s" (p. 11). This stage is as important as the first, because it "legitimated the first. Had HUAC's targets been able to survive their encounters with the committee without losing their jobs, the committee would have lost its mandate. This did not happen. On the contrary, private employers [including universities] often rushed to impose sanctions on these men and women, sometimes without waiting for the official machinery to run its course" (p. 9). Her book "shows how the academic community came to adapt itself to the suppression of [left] dissent" (p. 11).

Guarding the Ivory Tower carries forward Schrecker's chronicle of repression into the 1980s. Chapter 1 offers a summary of the history covered by No Ivory Tower. In their following nine chapters, the authors give a sketch of student and faculty challenges to orthodoxy during the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s and the repression that continued as of old.

Chapter 2 presents a summary of the growing student protests against the Vietnam War and racism during the 1960s, culminating in the killing of students at Kent State and Jackson State and by the firing of Angela Davis in the spring of 1970. Chapter 3 begins at this point in time with an account of how dissident faculty and students were put down at the University of Illinois and elsewhere and the difficulty those faculty had finding other employment. Chapter 4 focuses upon the persistence of repression

at the University of Washington in Seattle, the scene of intense repression during the McCarthy era discussed by Schrecker, particularly in the Political Science department during the 1970s. The intention of Chapter 5 is to show that the events described in the preceding three chapters "were not isolated incidents" but were part of a nationwide "counter-offensive" to "rid the campuses of individuals and organizations that presented serious threats to the traditional ideological and social control" function of higher education (p. 88). Chapter 6 is an account of the firing of a University of Wisconsin-Parkside professor for his radical views and actions. And Chapter 7 describes the Mosqueda-Judd case at the University of Denver.

The two books provide a significant addition to our knowledge of how the upholders of the dominant ideology--Cold War, technology, corporate oligopoly, military might, global expansion, acquisitive individualism, consumption--have maintained and reproduced themselves partly through coercion in higher education. And apparently this method of control continues.

According to Russell Jacoby, political dismissal "happens continually." And he adds a factor neither he nor Schrecker nor Meranto and Lippman sufficiently discuss and which leads into the need for an archive: the dismissals generally go unreported today. David Abraham was let go at Princeton; Paul Piccone from Washington University in St. Louis; Henry Giroux from Boston University. There was publicity about Abraham, but little about Piccone and Giroux. And Jacoby doubts whether similar events in backwater colleges would stir more than minor local concern. Community colleges, often lacking a tradition of academic freedom or tenure, are particularly vulnerable. An increasing number of teachers--employed part-time or on one-year contracts--are not protected even by the weak support of a tenure-track position.

An Archive on Political Repression

An archive would inhibit political persecution in academia by its very existence, and would strengthen the more direct methods of resistence. Self-defense through formal review and appeal procedures, either inside an organization or through the courts, is expensive and sometimes, perhaps often, futile, particularly in harassment cases. Wider, public support is needed, publicity for a strong public case in addition to a formal case. Brian Martin believes that "public campaigns hold a reasonable chance for obtaining justice, and indeed in many cases the only chance" (96). Not only must the media be mobilized, but the challenger must build links with action groups such as trade unions, feminists, and environmentalists (97). In the United States public support is particularly important, since the Supreme Court declared academic political firings to be Constitutionally permissible. In the absence of union solidarity among academics, possibly the main recourse remaining is the weight of public opinion both within and outside the academic community. Respect for the value of academic freedom as a concept persists among most teachers and citizens, apparently, possibly because the pernicious effects of censorship in Soviet academia over all aspects of the Soviet state are well known and abhorred. In the democratic tradition of remedial exposure of abuses, then, the first

task is to make known to the academic community and to the public that, in spite of the need for teachers critical of conformity to prejudice and power, repression of such teachers has been no spasmodic phenomenon in the U.S., but has persisted and persists today, and continues to be underestimated and underreported. An archive would lead to exposure in several ways. Preeminently, it would demonstrate the fact of the tenacity of the problem, for such a collection would attract scholars and lead to publications. The stubborn recurrence of repression--in defiance of the ideal of academic freedom--could not be disregarded.

As a guide to the workings and mechanisms of repression, still too little understood, the archive would gain an even greater political and historical value. The lack of materials in the past has hindered the study of the ramifications of how the system operates. People are fired, not hired, and harassed. Each process follows a different course, and each needs study. For example, the distinguished Marxist economist Paul Baran was hounded while at Stanford University over his courses, salary, and leaves of absence. After he traveled to Cuba in 1960 for a meeting with Castro, Stanford's efforts to push him out intensified. Because he had tenure, however, the university did not fire him. Baran wrote that the harassments played "havoc with the nervous system," and three years afterward in 1964 he died of a heart attack (Jacoby, p. 177). An archive would reveal the patterns of firing, not hiring, and harassment.

Its psychological and moral value to the living victims of repression would be considerable. At present these faculty members are isolated from each other and perhaps many have become demoralized. A journal, ZEDEK, has been published since 1980 by the Social Activist Professor Defense Foundation, but it is difficult to find: the inter-library loan librarian at my university could not locate it at any university in the United States. Nor have I found any repressed teacher in contact with similar teachers. And because many of these people are unemployed now, and are therefore not listed in the National Faculty Directory, I have had great difficulty locating them. One teacher I did find by letter telephoned me to express support for an archive, for in the apparent absence of support for his case he had abandoned efforts for redress. The archive would offer a collection of shared experiences by which healing and strengthening could be enhanced.

A central collection, knowledge of the mechanisms and process, process, dissemination of information via publications, and solidarity among victims would strengthen the struggle to enlarge freedom of thought and speech and equal rights in academia.

But these records also possess high historical value in themselves, as part of the larger record of this nation's experiment in freedom.

Principles for Appraisal and Selection of Documents

An unassimilated mass of documents about a case is virtually useless. Both to encourage participants to collect and document their cases effectively and to enable readers to grasp the meaning of each case and to assess the validity of both sides of a controversy, a well-organized, standard format is needed. Maynard

Brichford's Archives & Manuscripts: Appraisal & Accessioning provides general principles:

1. Uniqueness. Primary materials not duplicated elsewhere possess greatest value.

2. Credibility. Documents must be authentic and reliable.

3. Understandability. Documents should be expressed and arranged for maximal accessibility and meaning to readers. (For example, individual sets of documents provided by faculty members might be preceded by a) a chronology of important events, b) a summary of the case, c) separation of primary and secondary materials, each arranged chronologically.)

4. Time Span. Records should extend over a sufficient period of time for drawing valid conclusions.

Here follows a basic possible organization of a file which provides expression and correction from both sides. Such an archive would stand against accusations of one-sidedness, would encourage participants to present their case as effectively as possible, would screen out unsubstantial cases, since individuals with weak cases might not want to be tested by the other side, and perhaps would influence administrations to improve their behavior.

I. Documents from the Complainant
   - A. Summary of Case
   - B. Annotated Chronology with Numbered Pointers to Documents

II. Documents from the University
   - A. Summary of Case
   - B. Annotated Chronology

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